

## **News Release**

Franklin County Board of Commissioners | Office of Public Affairs | (614) 525-3322

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## FRANKLIN COUNTY RETAINS BEST BOND RATING

The financial ratings firm Standard and Poor's announced Wednesday that it has reaffirmed its AAA long-term rating of Franklin County's general obligation bonds, the highest rating possible. Standard and Poor's says that the AAA rating reflects an "extremely strong capacity to meet financial commitments", and specifically cited the county's strong financial management, diverse economy, and strong general fund reserves despite recent declines in revenue. The county's stadium facility project bonds received the agency's second highest rating of AA+, reflecting a "very strong capacity to meet financial commitments".

"We're very pleased to again receive the highest bond rating," said Franklin County Board of Commissioners President, John O'Grady. "Not only does it reflect the strong management of our financial team, but it also means that the county is able to borrow at lower interest rates, which saves the taxpayers money."

Standard and Poor's reevaluates and issues bond ratings on local governments periodically, and Franklin County has received the highest rating on each occasion since 1993.

"Our need to focus strategic priority on fiscal sustainability led me to author our guiding policy on finance in 2007," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "This policy guided us through the Great Recession with our Double AAA rating intact. S&P's reaffirmation of our AAA rating is yet again a demonstration of Franklin County's fiscal strength. Once more, Franklin County remains one of the very few in the nation and only Ohio county to hold this prestigious rating of which I am quite proud."

In addition to deriving funds from sources such as the state, sales tax, and property taxes, counties issue bonds, sometimes for specific infrastructure projects like stadiums or bridge repair. Investors purchase the bonds, which provides an infusion of cash to the county and, after a set period, the county pays back the purchase price plus interest to the investors. Just as in consumer credit, the higher a county's credit rating, the lower the interest rate it pays.

"It's really gratifying for the county's bonds to continue to be so highly rated," said Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "This is a tangible way in which strong management and responsible budgeting are saving money for the taxpayers, and underscores to the business community that Franklin County continues to be a great investment."

The other major bond rating service, Moody's Investors Service, affirmed its AAA rating of Franklin County bonds in February of this year, citing healthy cash reserves, a sizable tax base, and the county's stable economy. Franklin County is one of only 55 in the nation with AAA ratings from both Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investors Service.